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Keeping Your New Year's Resolutions

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New Year's resolutions are easy to make but can be hard to keep, especially when we try to substitute new habits for old. Healthy living and wellness can easily be achieved, especially when following these tips to ensure you are meeting and keeping your goals.

- Make sustainable changes in the New Year: Be realistic in your goals. Some of the biggest problems people have is setting too many goals and not being specific enough. Choose two or three resolutions, and if these are met, then create more as the year goes on. Making a list of ten items you want to change is overwhelming and not realistic. When setting your goals, make sure they are specific. Avoid "exercise more" or "eat better". These are too general and make it difficult to assess success. Instead try "eat vegetables at every meal" or "go to the gym 3 days a week". These are more obtainable, and easier to see when goals are not being met.
- Avoid "attacking" your resolutions: Often times we set our resolutions and go into attack mode trying to incorporate all of these changes at the same time. We see something as an enemy and head full force into a war. Slow down and think of each goal as a small battle. Try incorporating your goals one at a time, and give yourself at least a week to practice before adding another.
- Relax and don't stress: Failure results from stressing over our goals. It is a dead-end strategy to making healthier decisions. Approach your goals from a place of relaxation and low stress. Easier said than done. However, if you follow the two previous tips, this should help create a more stress-free environment for change.

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- Let go of perfectionism: During lifestyle changes it is common to have bursts of energy, plateaus, and even declines. It is part of the cycle. Because of this, it is important to recognize these different stages when experiencing them. Enjoy when there are bursts of energy, but don't lose interest or get frustrated when there are plateaus and setbacks. Discipline, restriction, guilt, and beating ourselves up are counterproductive to change. Letting go of perfectionism will allow you to see what small changes you have made. Falling off the wagon is okay and expected, but it is important to jump back on and notice the renewed energy it brings to accomplishing your goal.
- Recruit team players: Meeting goals is extremely difficult when doing it alone. The most successful goal-setters rely on a support group to encourage them and/or participate with them. When you have a friend, partner, or group of people to participate with, there is an increase in adherence and success. If exercise is your resolution, consider a personal trainer or sign up for classes that are led by a teacher (yoga, pilates, Zumba, spin class). Having a teacher or trainer will ensure you are doing the exercises properly and provide a safe environment to push you to the next level.



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